

acquire their property. The complaint is filed with the district court of the district where the land is located and the appropriate compensation is ascertained. Once this process is completed, the federal government is afforded the option of paying this amount and assuming the title of the land or moving for dismissal, in which case, the title of the property remains with the original owner. It is important to remember that during this process, the landowner's opportunity to conduct any type of development is severely limited, depriving these individuals of time, revenue and, in some cases, overall value in their land.

The second alternative is termed a "quick-take" procedure where the title of the property is immediately transferred to the federal government and an amount, which the government presumes the land is worth, is provided to the owner. Normal protocol is then followed, a condemnation complaint is filed and the court determines just compensation. If this amount is more than that originally provided, the federal government is required to pay the difference with interest.

The Prompt Compensation Act of 1998 will require the federal government to provide just compensation to the property owner within 90 days or forfeit its interest. In other words, this legislation will simply make the "quick-take" procedure the only option available to the federal government. The Prompt Compensation Act of 1998 will require the federal government to strongly consider all viable alternatives before attempting to acquire new land and prevent landowners from losing valuable time in developing their property. I urge all my colleagues to become a cosponsor of this bill and to strongly consider the significant impact this legislation will have in curbing the taking authority of the federal government, while at the same time, strengthening the private property rights of America's landowners.

IN PRAISE OF INGHAM COUNTY'S EFFORTS TO REDUCE TEEN SMOKING

HON. DEBBIE STABENOW

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 15, 1998

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the outstanding work of the Ingham County Board of Commissioners and the Ingham County Health Department in restricting the sale of tobacco to minors. The Ingham County Board of Commissioners passed an ordinance effective January 1, 1993 requiring that tobacco could only be sold through establishments licensed by the county. For violations, the Health Department can issue citations and for repeated violations have the license to sell tobacco revoked.

These enforcement provisions are similar to many used for enforcing liquor laws in communities which have been very effective in curbing the sale of liquor to minors. The possibility of losing a license to sell liquor or tobacco for a violation of law has proven to have a significant impact on the business community's self monitoring activities.

In 1992, 78% of minors who attempted to purchase cigarettes in Ingham County were successfully able to make a purchase. In other words, only 22% of all minors were refused

the sale. Since the ordinance was instituted in the county in 1993, that number has declined dramatically. In a recent investigation conducted in Ingham county, 85% of all minors who attempted to purchase cigarettes were denied the sale. These are impressive statistics that I would like to see repeated across the nation.

The war against teen smoking will only be successful if it is fought on many fronts. Tough, comprehensive laws must be passed at the federal level. And, we must work in partnership with states and local governments if we are to be successful. I encourage state and local governments across our country to join the fight and follow the example set by Ingham County by instituting laws in their communities that prevent minors from purchasing cigarettes. I commend the efforts of the Ingham County Board of Commissioners and the Ingham County Health Department for making a bold effort to improve the health and welfare of our community's youngest citizens.

BALINT VAZSONYI: TRUE AMERICAN

HON. GEORGE P. RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 15, 1998

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend Dr. Balint Vazsonyi as a true American. Balint Vazsonyi knows first-hand what it means to live in fear, as he has done so under Nazi occupation then under Communist oppression in his native Hungary.

Overcoming the barriers to human expression put up by authoritarian states, Dr. Vazsonyi has since become a world-renowned concert pianist, and a well-respected historian and ultimately a United States citizen.

Dr. Vazsonyi, or just plain "Balint", is a regular op-ed contributor to the Washington Times as well as several other newspapers around the country. He sits on the boards of many community groups and is the Director of the Center for the American Founding. As a child he lived under Nazi terror and as an adolescent he participated in the Hungarian uprising against the Soviet occupiers.

Balint's musical career is well known. He received his Artist Diploma at Budapest's famed Liszt Academy. Just recently, the Hungarian Embassy in Washington, DC presented him a gala piano recital in celebration of the 50th anniversary of his first concert appearance in Hungary. Balint also has a Ph.D. in history.

I highly recommend to my colleagues, and all Americans, his new book, "America's 30 Years War: Who is Winning?" Drawing on his own life experiences he describes how our hard-won freedoms are gradually being eroded. Vazsonyi traces the essence of what makes America unique, from the Founding until today, and exposes how ideas imported from European socialist states are undermining America's distinct political and moral culture.

In a witty and personal style, Balint documents how the founding principles of the rule of law, individual rights, secure ownership of property and common American identity are being deliberately supplanted by the alien notions of group rights, forced redistribution of private possessions, and multiculturalism.

In "America's 30 Years War: Who is Winning?" Dr. Vazsonyi shows, with unmistakably clarity, how every time we move away from America's founding principles we move toward the failed model of European socialism.

Please take time to read this seminal and through-provoking book.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Dr. Balint Vazsonyi on his many accomplishments and I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing him many more years of success.

SOCIAL SECURITY

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 15, 1998

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert my Washington Report for Wednesday, July 8, 1998 into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM

In recent months, much attention has been focused in Congress on the status of the Social Security program. Following President Clinton's State of the Union address this past January in which he recommended that saving Social Security be a top priority, reform proposals have become a hot topic. The most widely discussed proposals include investing some of the Social Security Trust Fund in the stock market, adding a meanstest requirement, or enacting a combination of tax cuts and benefit reductions.

SUCCESS OF SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security is not only a very popular program but has also proven to be an extremely successful program in providing a safety net for our nation's elderly.

Since the program began under President Franklin Roosevelt in 1935, Social Security has provided benefits to generations of workers and their families, with the number of beneficiaries over the last half century in excess of 160 million Americans. With almost 92% of Americans over the age of 65 receiving Social Security benefits, this program provides nearly universal coverage. In Indiana, over 960,000 Hoosiers are beneficiaries, covering over 17% of our state's population. Therefore, Social Security has played, and continues to play, an important role in the lives of many beneficiaries and their families.

In addition to serving as a broad safety net for millions of Americans, Social Security is also the largest anti-poverty program. By some estimates, half of our nation's elderly (about 18 million people) would live in poverty if Social Security did not exist. Last year, two-thirds of the elderly in America were provided benefits from Social Security that represented at least half of their income. Social Security is more than simply a retirement program. More than a third of benefits go to widows or widowers, children, and the disabled.

LONG-TERM SOLVENCY

Social Security is our largest domestic social program. In 1996, the benefits paid out exceeded \$347 billion. Social Security has been able to pay these benefits with great efficiency. Administration costs for Social Security are about 1% of benefits, compared to the 12-14% that is typical for private insurance plans. But while the program has operated with relative efficiency over the years, there still remain significant challenges to the long-term financial health of Social Security. In particular, the impending increase in the number of retirees and the increase in